



Customer Service

De-escalation

Techniques

January 2021



Difficult Calls

While most callers are pleasant, there will be occasions where you will need to work with an irate caller.

As customer service representatives, we often find ourselves in sticky situations.

- By keeping our approach simple, we can navigate through those tight spots with a little more ease.
- The next time you find yourself faced with an irate caller, just remember to remain clam and take the **HEAT**!



HEAT is a simple tool to help you work through difficult conversations





Taking the Heat

H.E.A.T.

Hear – Actively listen to the caller and understand the issue/concern

Empathize – with on a human level – be genuine

Apologize for the problem or inconvenience. This is not the same as accepting blame or agreeing with what is stated

Take responsibility for action by:

- Repeating and clarifying your understanding of the situation
- Offer options and recommendations on what you CAN do





Taking the HEAT – Hear

“H” stands for “HEAR”.

This simply means that you give an ear to the customer’s issue. Sometimes just doing this will diffuse the situation. Hearing the customer out, makes a tremendous difference.

- Listen and Do Not interrupt.
- Let the person finish expressing their frustration before you jump in.

Paraphrase as they share their story. *“Let me see if I understand...”*





Taking the HEAT – Empathize

“E” is for “EMPATHIZE”.

By expressing genuine empathy, you are letting the customer know that you care. You are trying to make an attempt to understand the situation. This often goes a long way with customers.

Phrases such as *“I can understand how frustrating this would be...”*

Imagine the following example...

Recently, you went with friends to a local restaurant. You had reservations, but the table you had requested was not available and would not be for some time.

Even though everyone behaved like polite adults, the hostess took the initiative to say that she wouldn't blame us if we had gotten upset.

She acknowledged that she herself would have been unhappy. Good call on her part.





Taking the HEAT – Apologize

“A” is for “Apologize” ...or even... “ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY”.

Accepting responsibility means not passing the buck. It means not saying that it's not your job, blaming another department, or pushing the complaint aside. It means you are willing to apologize on behalf of the company you work for and you will do whatever is in your power to improve the situation.

- Offer an apology even if the problem is not your fault. It is easier for some people to say they are sorry than it is for others. Don't blame someone else.
- Often all the angry person wants is to hear the words, “I'm sorry.”

This is a great time to ask detailed questions to better understand the situation if necessary. Say, *“I'm going to do everything I can to help. To do that I need just a few more details, is that okay?”* If they say No or continue complaining, just go back to H and E. If they say Okay, proceed to ask whatever details you require.





Taking the HEAT – Take Action

“T” is for “TAKING ACTION”.

Take action. Do something to change the situation within your power. Connect the customer with the right person. Let the customer know that you have done everything you could have done to make the situation better.

Once you’ve heard the person out, empathized with the situation, offered an apology, let your customer know what you will do about the situation and do it.

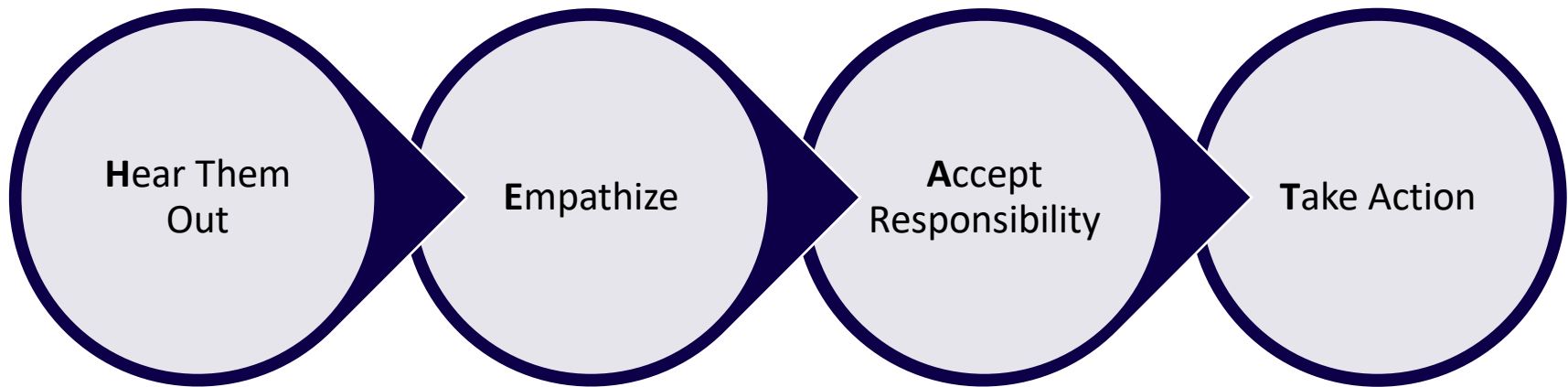
Even if your action is to take the issue to a higher level for resolution, act without delay and let the customer know how you are handling the problem.





De-Escalation

Take the H.E.A.T.



Be Quiet & Listen

- Listen
- Understand

Speak

- Pay Attention
- Apologize
- Thank You

Action

- Apologize
- Offer Solutions
- Provide documentation

Satisfied Customer

- Stronger relationship

